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Duxbury Clipper

Town Rededicates a Piece of History

By KELLY CLARK

2006 marks the 100th birthday of the Bluefish River Fire House and what better gift than a complete restoration. Originally known as Engine Company No. 1, this fire house dates back to 1906 and provides a glance at the town's early fire-fighting history.

Nancy Bennett initiated this project over a year ago when she announced that \$9,800 of Community Preservation Act funding would be allotted to restoring the fire house's exterior at the March 2005 Town Meeting. Friends of the Bluefish River Fire House was created and this committee began to spread the word throughout the town that the project would need its help.

At the celebration revealing the newly-restored fire house, Bennett was pleased to thank the residents and businesses of Duxbury for their support in completing this project. "Without the community preservation and the generosity...we wouldn't be here," Bennett said. Bennett had many heart-felt thank yous for everyone involved with the restoration.

Town Manager Richard MacDonald also spoke, saying, "This building is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when people care."

Betsy Sullivan, chairwoman of the Board of Selectmen, presented a resolution honoring Bennett during the celebration. In the resolution, Bennett is described as "instrumental in the restoration of the Bluefish River Fire House, a historical gem we look proudly on today and will for future generations...Nancy

L. Bennett demonstrated volunteerism at its best, much in the spirit of the earlier firefighters of Engine Company #1."

In addition to the resolution, Fire Chief Kevin Nord presented Bennett with a shield front that reads, "Chief Bluefish Engine Co." Usually, shield fronts are displayed on the helmets of the firefighters; however, Bennett's shield is made more for the mantle.

One honored guest who spoke about his experiences living near the Bluefish River Fire House was Stan Merry. His father, Hortense "Hot" Merry, was the second appointed captain of the fire house. Stan Merry explained that he used to live right up the street and when the fire alarm rang, he would run down the hill, get on the back of the truck and ring the siren.

Bennett also had a personal connection with the fire house, which became the reason she started the project in the first place. "I grew up over here and it seemed like it was a shame to lose a landmark," she said.

Bennett's husband was also a fireman who rose to the rank of lieutenant by the end of his career. With her newly-garnered shield front, Bennett laughed, "Now there's a retired lieutenant and a chief in our house...and I'm the chief."

The Bluefish River Fire House will continue to be used as storage and office space for the Harbormaster and there are still a few renovations that Bennett hopes to tackle in the near future. "The reason we did [restored] it as a fire house is that's what it was built for," Bennett said.